

Mono County Collaborative Planning Team

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CPT MINUTES

December 7, 2006
(Adopted February 22, 2007)

Members Present: Chair Tom Farnetti, Mono Supervisors; John Eastman, Mammoth Lakes Town Council; Terry Russi, BLM alternate; Jon Regelbrugge, USFS/Inyo; Joseph Saulque, Benton Paiute Reservation; Ryan Dermody, Caltrans

Members Absent: Brad Mettam, Caltrans; Beverly Cheeseboro, DWP alternate; Denyse Racine, DFG; Jeff Bailey, USFS/Inyo; Cindi Mitton, Lahontan RWQCB; Art Sam, Bridgeport Indian Colony

Staff Present: Scott Burns, Louis Molina, Martin Schleich, C.D. Ritter

Guests Present: Hap Hazard, Mono Supervisors; Mark Maldonado, Mammoth Lakes Housing; Rick Kattelmann; Walt Pachucki; Wilma Wheeler, Sierra Club; Mike McKenna, *The Sheet*; Lara Kirkner, *Mammoth Times*; Lisa Cutting & Clare Cragan, Mono Lake Committee; Mary Canada, Sierra Business Council; Tim Alpers, Owens River Ranch

1. CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE/INTRODUCTIONS: Chair Tom Farnetti called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m., and John Eastman led the flag salute. The CPT members introduced themselves to the public, and Farnetti introduced Hap Hazard, incoming chair.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: Wilma Wheeler, Sierra Club: Yesterday water flowed into the Lower Owens about 32 mi south of Bishop, first in 93 years. The celebration attracted 400+ people, including Los Angelenos who seemed just as happy as Inyo residents. Many people worked up to 25 years to get it done, and Judge Lee Cooper had ordered a \$5,000/day penalty till water flowed. Now it's the biggest river restoration project in the country. When the pump-back station is built 62 miles down river, water will be pumped back into the aqueduct. No estimate on water loss has been projected. Restoration should occur in three to five years. At the ceremony Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa indicated he wants to make L.A. the largest green city in the country.

Lisa Cutting, Mono Lake Committee: Starting flows of 10 cfs will recharge the system and eventually rise to 40 cfs. A warm-water fishery should form in four to five years. Stream habitat flows of 200 cfs for two weeks in spring will coincide with vegetation colonization.

Mary Canada, Sierra Business Council: The SBC's 12th annual conference had Eastern Sierra attendees. One of three focal points was Heritage Economy. In January, the SBC plans to update a map of historic sites from Ridgecrest to Bridgeport, as many residents are unaware of regional historic sites.

3. MINUTES: No minutes for the Aug. 31 meeting due to secretary's absence

4. AGENCY ROUNDTABLE: Agencies provided updates on planning issues and pending projects.

5. UPDATE ON MAMMOTH LAKES HOUSING INC.: Mark Maldonado, executive director, indicated the nonprofit entity receives 1 percent of Transient Occupancy Tax and is fully staffed with five persons and a consulting team. He sits on boards of directors, hoping to influence large bond issues. This Saturday 48 renters are moving into Aspen Village. Meridian Court has sold all but one of its 24 units. In spring, construction will start on 24 for-sale condo units near Snowcreek.

A park-and-ride facility at Tavern Road/Old Mammoth Road proposes on-site affordable housing. The lower layers of the two-story enclosed structure will have 200 parking spaces, with housing and 8,000

square feet of commercial retail above. The facility is bond-funded and has low-income housing tax credits.

The state's Department of Housing and Community Development will make available a sum of \$200 million in July. MLH is partnering with Mono County on homebuyer assistance. One goal is affordable housing for first responders. Technical assistance grants for Mammoth Lakes are possible.

Competition for tax credits is slanted against rural counties, so MLH must create different funding mechanisms. Issues include housing for seasonal workers, and low- and middle-income commuters.

Developer Boxenbaum has sought advice from MLH on his Crowley Lake Estates project. Economics have changed since the affordable housing project's approval in 2002, when it was analyzed at a lower rate. He has encountered funding issues and wants to eliminate long-term debt.

6. WATERSHED ASSESSMENTS – Mono Basin, Upper Owens, West Walker: Hydrologist Rick Kattelmann indicated that the watershed assessments will be submitted to the State by March, but that will not end the effort. These will be recommendations only, with no "teeth." California funds can not be used in Nevada, so the West Walker assessment ended at the diversion into Topaz Lake.

Findings common to all three watersheds included localized riparian disturbance, piecemeal loss of wetlands, natural erosion, and widespread fecal contamination due to insufficient public facilities. The primary threat to all is wildfire and subsequent erosion. Some localized problems need attention, but monitoring of water quality is not cost effective. Persistent loss of wetlands is a major concern. Key resources at risk are riparian habitat, aquatic habitat, wetlands, and threatened and endangered species.

Kattelmann cited insufficient public facilities. The closure of Crestview rest stop, for example, has resulted in pollution to roadside streams. He suggested reactivating the CPT Wetlands Subcommittee and considering potential roles of member agencies.

7. MONO SURFACE WATER & GROUNDWATER AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENTS: Andy Zdon, TEAM Engineering & Management Inc. senior hydrologist, described the scope of work, key concepts, conclusions, and recommendations.

The groundwater equation is inflow – outflow = change in storage. The intent is to maintain equilibrium without incurring new stress. Questions on groundwater include: How much water *is* there? Is available groundwater a number or a concept? What about drawdown of existing wells?

The five areas studied were Antelope Valley, Mono City, Lee Vining, Crowley Lake/Aspen Springs, and Tri-Valley (Benton, Hammil and Chalfant). The literature search gathered technical documents, water rights information from the State Water Resources Control Board and an environmental database search, as well as hydrologic data from USGS, LADWP, etc. Surface water assessments summarized conditions, evaluated water usage vs. availability, quality issues, availability for development, and impacts.

Recommendations include monitoring groundwater levels, logging data sets for future high-capacity wells by a state-licensed geologist, analyzing for petroleum hydrocarbons and volatile organic compounds, and community-specific groundwater management plans that foster citizen involvement on issues.

8. MEETING SCHEDULE: Meetings for next year will be held the final Thursday of alternating months starting in January. The next meeting will be at 9 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 25, 2007.

9. ADJOURN: 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
C.D. Ritter, CPT secretary